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COUNTRY East Germany

SECURITY INFORMATION

REPORT NO. TOPIC Cottbus AirfieldEVALUATION 25X1X

PLACE OBTAINED

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REFERENCES

PAGES 2

ENCLOSURES (NO. & TYPE)

REMARKS

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1. The following air activity was observed at Cottbus airfield between 3 and 8 July 1953:

3 July: There was air activity between 4:30 a.m. and about 6 p.m. Between 1 p.m. and 2:30 p.m., individual planes took off and remained aloft for 4 to 5 minutes. Subsequently, individual aerobatics and flights in formations of two and four planes were made. The MiG-15s involved in these flights included seven with the red Nos 147, 167, 1221, 1278, 1299, 1315, and 1594.

4 July. At about 11 a.m., the weather was fair, take-offs were made by swept-back jet fighters which assembled in a formation of ten and practiced flying for 30 minutes. Subsequently, flights were made in formations of two, four and five planes. About 75 MiG-15 and U-MiG-15 planes, 1 Li-2 and 10 Yaks were parked in front of the hangars at the field.

5 and 6 July. There was no air activity during the noon hours. The sky was clear to partly cloudy.

7 July. At noon, three Yak-type planes were observed at the take-off point. The weather was cloudy. Individual planes practiced flying for 15 minutes. Technical instruction was given on the jet fighters parked in front of the hangars.

8 July. There was air activity about 10 a.m. The weather was cloudy. The road to Dahltitz was blocked.

2. In late 1952, the officers, NCOs and EM of the VPL regiment in Cottbus wore the new olive drab uniforms. The NCOs and EM of the flight personnel had light blue collar patches. The officers from the flight personnel also had a silver wing on their collar patches. At first, the NCOs and EM had also worn the silver wing which, by order of the VPL division issued in December 1952, was reserved for the officers.

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3. The monthly pay amounted to 308 eastmarks for Pfc's, 360 eastmarks for NCOs, and 380 eastmarks for sergeants. The following daily rations were issued to the VPL personnel: for breakfast, 50 grams of butter, 30 grams of sausage and bread which was unrationed; for lunch, potatoes and vegetables (unrationed), meat or fish (unrationed) three times a week; for supper, 50 grams of butter, 30 grams of sausage, 50 grams of cheese, and bread which was unrationed. There were seldom complaints about the food. The following articles of clothing were issued: 1 pair of trousers, 1 jacket, 1 overcoat, 1 fatigue uniform, 1 athletic costume, sports-wear consisting of 1 shirt and 1 pair of trousers, 1 pair of shoes, 3 pairs of pants, 3 undershirts, 2 sports shirts, 2 pair of socks, 2 handkerchiefs, 1 visor cap, and 1 field cap. Allegedly, the outfit was not yet complete.
4. The Russians were quartered at the field, while the VPL personnel and offices were located in the following buildings east of Cottbus-Burg road: Guardhouse, about 8 x 10 meters, which was nearing completion in late December 1952; a two-story brick building, which housed the offices of the paymaster of the VPL regiment; another two-story brick building, which housed the offices of the motor pool; and the headquarters of the VPL division; the dispensary had 15 beds in December 1952 and an additional 30 beds were to be set up after completion of expansion work which was nearing completion; a three-story building, about 15 x 40 meters, which housed billets and administrative rooms of the supply battalion, with the kitchen and messhalls on the second floor and billets on the upper floor; two temporary buildings of the former Reich Labor Service, which were erected in December 1952, with one instruction room each, which were occupied by students of the training course for ground personnel; an administrative building, which housed a kitchen, messhall and storeroom on the ground floor and the clothing store of the VPL regiment on the upper floor; one quartering building, which housed the NCOs and EM of the 3rd Squad of the VPL regiment, the NCO and EM rooms being occupied by 4 and 16 men respectively, with a total of about 270 men quartered in the building; a two-story building, about 12 x 20 meters, was occupied by the officers of the flight and ground personnel; and a three-story headquarters building, about 15 x 30 meters, which housed the headquarters of the division and of the flight regiment, in addition to kitchen and messhalls for the flight personnel.

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1. ☐ Comment. At present, Cottbus airfield is occupied by the operations staff of the VPL, the headquarters of VPL Div 600, and the VPL Regts 601 and 603. The operations staff arrived from Berlin-Johannisthal in June 1953. The VPL Regt 603 was originally stationed in Bautzen from where it was transferred in January 1953 because of construction work at Bautzen-Litten airfield. Elements of the Soviet training regiment which trains VPL personnel are also stationed at Cottbus airfield. The number of aircraft observed at the field agrees with previous information. Some of the Yak-11 and Yak-18 trainers are probably parked in the hangars. The aircraft numbers observed on MiG-15s are reported for the first time from East Germany, except for No 147 which was observed at Neuruppin airfield some time ago. Thus, it is assumed that the MiG-15s which arrived from the USSR in April 1953 are now employed for air activity. It cannot be determined whether VPL pilots were employed during the air activity on 4 July. As the VPL pilots have been training with MiG-15s for only a short time, it appears more probable that, on this day, the pilots of the Soviet training regiment practiced formation flying in order to keep up their good status of being ready for military action at any time. This assumption appears probable in conjunction with the experiences made during the 17 June uprising in East Germany.

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2. ☐ Comment. The statements of the VPL member confirm previous information and furnish a picture of the quartering facilities of the VPL at Cottbus airfield. However, the statements received are not believed to be quite complete.